

POLICE COMMUNICATION TECHNICIAN

FACT SHEET



The Columbus Division of Police has many civilian career opportunities for those individuals who would like to pursue a career within the Division of Police. One such position is the Police Communications Technician. The Police Communications Technicians are assigned to the Communications Bureau. This bureau serves as a vital communications link between the citizens of the community and the personnel within the Division of Police.

The initial application and the testing process for the Police Communications Technician positions are handled through the Columbus Civil Service Commission. Civil Service is located at 50 W. Gay Street. The Police Communications Technician examination is a computer-based performance simulation of the actual job. This examination will test your abilities in various areas, such as decision-making, data entry, memory recall, and others. Once you have passed this examination, your name will be certified to the Division of Police, which will then begin its portion of the hiring process. This process includes the completion of an extensive personal history questionnaire, criminal background check, polygraph examination, interviewing and a pre-employment drug test.

As a new employee, you will receive approximately 8 weeks of classroom instruction prior to the on-the-job training. During on-the-job training, new employees will work one-on-one with an experienced Comm Tech. On-the-job training will concentrate on several different positions in the bureau, such as call taking. Trainees who successfully complete the first phase of training will then move onto the second phase – main dispatching. The entire training program takes approximately 7 months to complete.

During this training, Police Communications Technicians are cross-trained for all of the positions at the Communications Center. These positions include non-emergency calls for service, 911 emergency calls, main channel dispatching, service channel dispatching, and LEADS. A Police Communications Technician may rotate from one to all of these positions on any given day. Each task has requirements unique unto itself. A brief description of each position is as follows:

Non-Emergency Complaint Phone Line

These phone lines are for non-emergency situations. This position answers the phone lines for the main number to the Division of Police, 645-4545. Citizens utilize this phone number for an array of issues, such as asking for general information about civil disputes, directions, loud music, etc. It is the Comm Tech's responsibility to listen to the caller and assess what the best resolution may be for the citizen. The Comm Tech may refer the caller to another agency or department. If police response is needed, the Comm Tech will generate an incident to be dispatched for police service. The Comm Tech determines what necessary information is needed to be provided to the responding officer(s). The Comm Techs use a coding system in order to prioritize the incidents accordingly.

911 Emergency Phones

These phones are for life-threatening situations or crimes in progress. Citizens call when there is imminent danger to life. The Comm Tech evaluates these calls for police action or for the Division of Fire to respond. Typically, calls on these lines are of a more serious nature, such as shootings, stabbings, robberies, heart attacks, strokes, etc. The Comm Tech determines what solution is needed and follows through to see that it is completed.

Main Channel Dispatching

The City is divided into zones. Each zone has approximately five precincts with 8 to 10 officers assigned to a precinct. Once an incident is written for dispatch, it is sent to the zone channel dispatcher via a computer-aided dispatching system. The Comm Tech must determine priority requirements, officer safety, and utilization of the appropriate equipment needed for each incident.

Service Channel Dispatching

This channel is monitored by two Comm Techs who provide assistance to the officers. Officers utilize this channel to request tow trucks, directions, have a family member contacted when someone has been involved in an accident, etc. This position also answers the direct phone lines from alarm companies for residential and commercial alarms.

LEADS

LEADS is an acronym that stands for Law Enforcement Automated Data System. This is a computer system that has a nationwide database of license tags, driving records, and warrant information. This system is also used to send teletypes to other law enforcement agencies and to request or send information. The position requires an annual exam certification in order to be qualified to operate this computer system.

As you can see, the position of Police Communications Technician requires hard work and dedication. A Comm Tech must also have good decision-making skills and be able to do several tasks simultaneously, prioritize work, and remain calm in stressful situations.

The Communication Center is a 24/7 operation. As a new employee, once you have completed your training, you will more than likely be assigned to second or third shift with weekdays off. Also, due to the nature of the work, there is overtime involved with this position. The majority of the overtime is filled on a voluntary basis. However, there are times when overtime can become mandatory.

As a Police Communications Technician you will receive a very competitive and excellent benefit package such as paid training, tuition reimbursement, paid holidays, health, dental, vision and prescription insurance and uniforms. Starting pay for a Police Communications Technician is \$15.25 per hour (\$31,720 annually). The Comm Techs are in a variable pay scale ranging from \$15.25 to \$19.01 per hour (\$39,540 annually).

As a Police Communications Technician you will receive the personal satisfaction of knowing that you are making a difference!

If you have any questions about becoming a Police Communications Technician or if you would like further information about making arrangements to observe the Communications Center, please contact Linda Guyton at 645-4201.

